

AA-311

Site of Providence
Providence

Established in 1649, Providence was the first Colonial settlement in Anne Arundel County. It was founded by Puritans from Virginia fifteen years after St. Mary's City was established by followers of Lord Baltimore. Fort, town and meeting house were in decline by 1670.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

Site of Providence

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

north of Greenbury Point, on land occupied by the radio towers belonging to the U.S. Navy. near Mill Creek Creek

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

Annapolis

STATE

COUNTY

3 CLASSIFICATION**CATEGORY**

☐ DISTRICT
☐ BUILDING(S)
☐ STRUCTURE
☐ SITE
☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC
☐ PRIVATE
☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☐ OCCUPIED
☐ UNOCCUPIED
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☐ YES: RESTRICTED
☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED
☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE ☐ MUSEUM
☐ COMMERCIAL ☐ PARK
☐ EDUCATIONAL ☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
☐ ENTERTAINMENT ☐ RELIGIOUS
☐ GOVERNMENT ☐ SCIENTIFIC
☐ INDUSTRIAL ☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ MILITARY ☐ OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE, zip code

VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Liber #:

Folio #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

AA-311

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT
☐ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☐ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☐ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES	BUILDER/ARCHITECT
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Established in 1649, Providence was the first Colonial settlement in Anne Arundel County. It was founded by Puritans from Virginia fifteen years after St. Mary's City was established by followers of Lord Baltimore. The settlers built a fort at the end of Greenbury Pt. to protect themselves from Indians. The site of the town bordered Mill Creek and a meeting house was built at the head of Carr Creek. The town was largely abandoned by 1670.

For further information on Providence see enclosed article by Charles Bichy in Broadneck-Maryland's Historic Peninsula, 1976 and Providence-Ye Lost Town in Maryland, 1976 by James E. Moss.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

see statement of significance

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Marion Morton Carroll- Historic Sites Surveyor Sept. 1978

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Anne Arundel Ct. Dept. of Planning and Zoning

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

Arundel Center

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Annapolis

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

Broadneck

MARYLAND'S HISTORIC PENINSULA

Written and compiled by residents of the Broadneck Peninsula
under the sponsorship of the Broadneck Jaycees

in

1976

the Bicentennial of the United States of America

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Map from Le Grand Atlas, W. J. and Jan Blaeuw, Amsterdam, 1667; copy from original in possession of Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Muto. MHR maps box 3 fld. 7. Broadneck area is shown opposite the north tip of the northernmost "island" shown in the Chesapeake Bay.

PROVIDENCE FIRST COLONIAL SETTLEMENT

In 1649, a small group of Puritan settlers landed on what is now known as Greenbury Point. To fully understand the significance of this event, we must go back to March of 1634 when a band of perhaps 200 people set foot on St. Clement Island and claimed as their own the lands granted Cecil Calvert and named Maryland. It is here, just up river from St. Clements, that those settlers established the city of St. Marys, which became the first permanent settlement in this new province.

Cecil Calvert, also known as Lord Baltimore, was a Catholic, but he made it clear from the beginning that he wished to avoid trouble over religion in the predominantly Protestant new world. He wanted to make his Province one that was free from religious persecution. To reinforce this desire he appointed William Stone, a protestant, as Governor of Maryland in 1649.

At this same time, Governor William Blakley of Virginia was taking a less tolerant view of religion and was becoming more insistent upon complete loyalty to the Church of England. This stance was having an adverse effect upon a group of Puritans who lived in Nansemond, Virginia, on the banks of the James River. As their numbers had grown, so had the intolerance of Governor Blakley. On a Sunday in May 1648, the High Sheriff of Virginia entered the Puritan Church and arrested Mr. Harrison, the pastor, and the church elder, William Durand. Mr. Harrison fled to New England while Mr. Durand, along with Richard Bennett, also an elder, took refuge in Maryland.

Governor Stone, learning of the plight of the Virginia Puritans and anxious to bring more colonists to Maryland, decided to discuss this matter with Mr. Durand and Mr. Bennett. As a result of their meeting, arrangements were made to receive in the province of Maryland those Puritans desiring to settle there. When on August 15, 1649, Edward Lloyd and approximately 24 other Puritan leaders were given until October 1 to swear allegiance to the Church of England or suffer the consequences, the stage was set.

In the fall of 1649, they left the shores of the James by boat for that part of Maryland to the north of the Patuxent River which had been set aside for their settlement. Surrounded by the beautiful wild shoreline, they sailed up the Chesapeake towards their new, unknown land. They were later to write, "With great cost, labor and danger did we remove ourselves and our estates."

Eight to ten families from Richard Bennett's plantation were the first to step ashore on Greenberry Point (now Greenbury point), located at the mouth of the Severn River. Following this group came others, and so thankful were they to have arrived safely at their new home, they gave it the name Providence. As we follow the history of this town the Puritans called Providence, we find it at different times referred to as "Severn," "Town of Severn," "Anne Arundel Town,"

"Town at Proctors," and often falsely referred to as "early Annapolis."

They found their new land to be heavily wooded and abundant in fowl and game. They also found that they shared the area with a group of Indians of the Susquehannock Tribe. The Susquehannas were of a large, handsome stature, and noted for their ferocious war-like tendencies. They had moved down into this part of Maryland from their main camp to the north, pushing the lesser tribes southward. Here they hunted and fished without any interference until the eventful landing of our Puritan settlers.

Out of fear of the Indians, the first task undertaken by this band of newcomers was to build a fort, which they located at the end of Greenberry Point. The fort, probably designed after the one at Jamestown, served to house and protect them until their new land could be surveyed. It was just inland from the fort that a tract of land containing 250 acres was assigned to Richard Bennett. These 250 acres were divided into lots of 15 acres; each family received one lot and the remainder belonged to Bennett. This tract took up the middle of the neck and ended near the entrance to Towne Creek (Carr Creek). Right next to this land a site was laid out, bordering on Mill Creek, for the town of Providence itself. It was in the town that most of the people were to live, visiting their plantation by day and returning by night. Outside the town and at the head of Carr Creek, we find the approximate location of the first meeting house erected by the Puritans. The meeting house was the center of the community and, as we shall see, was witness to many historical events. The land surrounding it served as the burial ground for many of the early people of Providence. It was in reference to this meeting house that the Reverend Ethan Allen wrote in 1857, "There was at this time (1692) in this county a Mr. Davis, a dissenting minister, and meeting houses there certainly were at West River and at Town Neck that is Greenberrys Point, and the latter was the place of worship for the surrounding neighborhood." The Rev. Allen went on to state that upon his visit in 1856, he found a huge slab marking the grave of Roger Newman who "departed this life the 14th of May 1704." He also wrote of seeing the tombstone of Col. Nicholas Greenberry who died in 1698, and of the vault (which had been broken into) where his remains were probably deposited. This vault, the Rev. Allen stated, was at that time (1856) under the woodshed of Capt. Taylor, the owner of the land.

A foot path connected the meeting house with the town and a road was built running the length of the neck from the fort into town. This road was later extended, branching off to run southwest and ending near the present site of the old Severn River Bridge. The other branch passed around the head of Mill Creek and ran through the center of Broadneck. In this community these remarkable people would estab-

Photo: Victoria Kemper

lish themselves as a moving force in the history of our state.

Soon after their arrival, Governor Stone asked the Puritans to fulfill the prerequisite for owning land in the province by swearing allegiance to Lord Baltimore. The Puritans refused because of the oath's stipulation that absolute dominion was Lord Baltimore's. However, by the spring of 1650, at the urgent request of Governor Stone, the Puritans yielded and elected two delegates, William Cox and George Puddington, to the General Assembly in St. Mary's. On convening at St. Mary's, the assembly passed the following: "An act for the erecting of Providence into a county by the name of Anne Arundel."

Following the adjournment of the Assembly, Governor Stone visited Providence and appointed Edward Lloyd as Commander of Anne Arundel County. To serve with Lloyd as Commissioners, he appointed James Homewood, Thomas Mears, Thomas March, George Puddington, Mathew Hawkins, James Merryman, and Henry Catlyn. In this way, Anne Arundel County was established and governed by our men of Providence.

By the spring of 1651, the Puritans had established a strong system of local government and had come to the conclusion that participation in the political life of the Province resulted only in higher taxes and civic dealings with people with whom they shared few interests. This belief and popularity of Cromwell and Puritanism in England caused the Puritans to refuse to send a delegate to the Assembly in 1651. A letter was drawn up by Mr. Lloyd and the Puritan free men telling Governor Stone of their belief that the proprietary government should be dissolved.

The beliefs of the Puritan leaders did have some foundation. Cromwell came to power and with him, Parliamentary rule. The governments in the colonies of Virginia and, to some extent, Maryland still professed loyalty to the exiled King, and because of this, Parliament called for their reducement. Governor Stone was removed from power by the Parliamentary representatives Mr. Clayborne and Mr. Bennett and Puritan leaders were put in control of the province.

Because of his popularity among the people of St. Mary's, Governor Stone remained a private citizen for only a short period of time. After his reappointment as Governor in July of 1652, he and his court began their duties with the following proceeding: "Whereas this court is informed, that the Susquehanna Indians have a long time desired and much pressed for the conclusion of a peace with the government and inhabitants of this province, which as is now conceived may lead very much to the safety and advantage of the inhabitants if advisedly effected." The order also gave full power to Richard Bennett, Edward Lloyd, Capt. William Fuller, Thomas Marsh, and Mr. Leonard Strong to execute a treaty with the Indians. These men, who were all inhabitants of the settlement at Providence, met with the Susquehannas, "at the river of Severn in the province of Maryland."



Quiet inlets and beaches of Broadneck welcomed Indians from across the Bay and colonists from across the Ocean.

On July 5, 1652, a treaty was agreed upon. Tradition has it that the signing took place under a poplar still standing on the College Green at Annapolis.*

Shortly after this historic treaty was signed, Governor Stone, acting at the request of settlers on the Eastern Shore, appointed Capt. Fuller to lead an expedition against the hostile Indians on the eastern side of the Bay. In light of the treaty just signed with the Indians of the Western Shore, Fuller told Governor Stone of the unwillingness of the Puritans to participate in such an expedition. He stated that he would only be interested in leading a party to settle the dispute in a peaceful manner. Governor Stone was outraged by the Puritans' refusal. He removed Mr. Lloyd from office and in December 1653, demanded again that all persons take the oath of fidelity to Lord Baltimore. Hearing this, the free men of Providence convened at their meeting house and under the leadership of Mr. Lloyd, petitioned Lord Baltimore and the Council of State with their objections. The petition was unanswered, so the Puritans prepared for battle. A force made up of Puritans from Providence and the Patuxent area marched on the Capitol of St. Mary's. They entered the city and without bloodshed regained control of the government.

One of the first acts undertaken by this new Puritan council was to change the name of Anne Arundel County back to its original name of Providence. They also passed an act disenfranchising Roman Catholics but this act was never enforced and it appears that the civil rights of the Catholics were always upheld.

By no means did Governor Stone take these events in stride. He wrote Lord Baltimore giving a full account of the proceedings and in the fall of 1654, Baltimore sent his envoy, Mr. Eltonhead, with his reply. This reply came in the form of a letter signed

*At the time of this event, there was no Annapolis or College of St. John. This treaty could have just as easily and more plausibly been negotiated right on the Broadneck Peninsula. There are to this day, in the vicinity of what was once Providence, poplar trees just as noble as the one standing on the College of St. John. We can only speculate as to the location of this event, but of its importance we can be sure.

by Lord Baltimore in which he recognized Stone and his council as the true government. He went even further, however, and ordered Stone to regain his authority by any means he saw fit.

Stone's first act after receiving this order was to send a party from St. Mary's to the home of Puritan Richard Preston to seize the records which had been placed there. When the Puritan Council, which was meeting in Providence, learned of this, they sent a letter to St. Mary's condemning Stone and asking by what authority he had acted. Governor Stone refused to show his written authority and instead made preparations to do battle with the Puritans of Providence.

While the men from St. Mary's were being pressed into service, all the Puritans were fleeing to Providence where they also were preparing for battle. Before long the Puritans learned that Stone's forces were heading up the bay. Upon hearing exaggerated reports of the size of these forces they decided to send a messenger offering to surrender their government if certain rights were met. These rights were: "The Liberty of English Subjects, Pardon For The Late Trouble and Liberty to Leave the Province." They further stated that, "We are resolved to commit ourselves into the hands of God, and rather die like men than be made slaves." Governor Stone refused to grant them these rights and actually seized the man who had brought the message.

Battle was now unavoidable and the Puritans prepared to meet the enemy. They placed into service the ship Golden Lyon, which was at anchor in the harbor, and hired its Captain, a Mr. Heamans, to fight on their side. This he did willingly, being of Puritan sympathies himself. They also placed into service a small fishing vessel and began to gather their men together on the plantation of Mr. Durand and Capt. Fuller.

On the afternoon of March 24, 1655, Stone's forces of 250 men and 12 boats entered the Severn River. In the lead was Governor Stone's ship carrying into battle for the first time the yellow and black flag of the Baltimore family. As the fleet approached the Golden Lyon, which they believed to be friendly, they were greeted by cannon fire. At this surprise the fleet fled across the river to the mouth of Spa Creek and made camp on Horns Point. During the night Capt. Heamans moved his vessel to block Stone's ships from leaving the Creek and brought his cannons to bear on those forces encamped on land. Meanwhile, Capt. Fuller had moved his men up river and crossed the Severn six miles above Stone's camp. The next day, Capt. Fuller marched his army of 100 men toward the forces of Governor Stone. He had given the order not to fire first, in the vain hope that Stone might surrender, but as several men from the Puritan ranks marched out in front to plant their flag, Stone's forces began to fire, killing one man. With that, the cry was heard from the Puritan force, "In the name of God, fall on." The Puritans did fall on with great fury and beat the men from St. Mary's back. With the Golden Lyon blocking their retreat and firing on them from the rear, they were defeated in a relatively short time.

When the firing was over, the Puritans had six dead and 50 of the force from St. Mary's were killed or wounded. The victorious Puritans recrossed the

Severn to Providence, taking with them their prisoners, who spent the night in the stockade fort awaiting their trial. The Council convened in the Meeting House and condemned to death most of the enemy force, but only three were actually executed: a Captain Lewis, Mr. Eltonhead and John Leggot. At the pleas of the Puritan women the others were saved and held in the fort for approximately one month.

The Puritans, in power again, remained in control until 1658 when an agreement was reached with Lord Baltimore in England. This agreement gave the Puritans exactly what they had always wanted: perfect liberty and equality. In order to attain these basic rights, however, they were forced to yield control of the province back to the proprietary government.

The lives of our Puritan founders settled down after 1658. They worked their plantations and worshipped as they pleased. During this time of peace several Quakers moved into Maryland and established themselves among the Puritans of Providence. As time went on they began to have a great deal of influence over the Puritans and by 1672 most of them had become Quakers. This change in doctrine brought them once more into disfavor. As Quakers they asked to be exempt from military duty and from taking the oath of agreement. Men such as Thomas Thurston and Josis Cole were arrested, and when the then Governor Fendall made a brief but futile attempt to gain absolute control of Maryland, it was the Puritan leaders who paid the price: Captain Fuller was outlawed from his beloved Providence and forced to live in exile.

Under the strain of religious persecution, many of our early settlers began to move on, some taking up plantations on the Eastern Shore and others returning to England. By the year 1676 little was left of the town of Providence, save a few homes and, of course, the all-important meeting house. Most of the Puritans who remained were living on plantations throughout the Broadneck Peninsula or across the Severn near what was to become Annapolis.